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ABSTRACT

Observation of 6 small groups of children viewing Sesame Street for 14 consecutive days allowed researchers to do more than analyze reactions to individual program segments. It was possible to compare programs as a whole and to see how individual film segments fared when viewed in different program contexts. A high degree of consistency was observed from group to group. The children lost interest when a program spent too long on one subject. Once they were distracted, it took a fairly strong film to get them back. The children responded well to computer animation films. They responded positively to anything that allowed them to recite the alphabet, and tended to keep reciting the alphabet after it was over. Lists of sequences, characters, songs, and films that received good-to-excellent reactions from the children are included. (PF)

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THE RESPONSES OF CHILDREN IN SIX SMALL VIEWING GROUPS TO SESAME STREET SHOWS 261-274

Barbara Frengel Reeves

July 20, 1971

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Responses of Children in Six Small Viewing Groups to Sesame Street Shows 261-274.

Comparing Whole Programs 1

The degree to which the Program Gives a feeling of variety..... 2

What happens on the street is an important programming variable..... 3

Introduction of elements that bring attention back 7

The length of individual program elements..... 8

Comparing Program Elements 9

Teaching Numbers..... 9

Reciting the Alphabet..... 11

Teaching letters..... 12

Teaching Words..... 15

Word Families..... 16

Relational Concepts..... 17

Powers of the Mind..... 18

Cooperation..... 20

Comparing Production Techniques 21

Use of Guest Stars..... 21

Songs..... 22

Mystery Drawings..... 24

Pixillation..... 24

Films..... 25

Muppets..... 27

Summary and Recommendations 30

This report is a summary of 14 days of observation of six small viewing groups. The observational data collected over shows 261-274 is important, not only for the vast amount of descriptive information they contain, but also for the number of shows covered and the number of groups that were observed.

The availability of observations on 14 consecutive programs allows us to do more than analyze reactions to individual program elements. It enables us to compare programs, as a whole, and to see how individual film segments fare when they are viewed in different programming contexts.

The fact that six groups were observed is important, because it enables us to look for consistency in the reaction of the groups to various programming elements. Often, in observing a single group, an outside event or even one of the viewers can distract the entire group. At such times it is difficult to assess what the reaction might have been had the distraction not occurred.

Reviewing this massive collection of data, one is impressed with the incredible degree of consistency in reactions from group to group on individual program elements and entire shows. A summary of the observations is presented in the appendix to this paper for anyone desiring information on a specific program or film. This report is an attempt to summarize some of the more comprehensive findings that become evident as one compares various programming elements with one another.

Comparing Whole Programs

Reviewing the observations taken over these programs, it is extremely clear that several were excellent, some good, some fair and

one was really pretty terrible. Some of the factors that seem to be important in determining how a show is received are: (1) The degree to which the program gives a feeling of variety, (2) What happens on the street, (3) The introduction of elements throughout the show that can bring attention back to the screen, and (4) The length of the individual elements that make up the program. Each of these factors is discussed in greater detail below.

The Degree to which the Program Gives a Feeling of Variety

Too much of the same kind of programming seems to give the show a feeling of "sameness." When this happens, the children tend to lose interest or become restless. The following examples will help to clarify what is meant by " a feeling of sameness" and where it occurs in these 14 programs.

Overworking a street theme. In several of the programs a good deal of the action on the street was tied to a common theme. When this happened, the different episodes did not seem to exciting enough in themselves to maintain attention. The following examples relate to this:

> Show 262: Pet Show. The children were very interested in this theme at the beginning. They were attentive, responsive, and loved Slimy, the worm. But, by the time first prize was awarded, the children were restless and inattentive.
>
> Show 265. Ice Cream Machine. Much of the street action revolved around the installation of an Ice Cream Machine on Sesame Street. By the time the ice cream man quit, hardly any children were still watching these segments.

Inclusion of too many similar elements. Aside from the street theme, a show tends to have a feeling of sameness about it if too many of the programming elements are similar. Good examples of this are the following:

> Show 267. Animal Films. In this program, five animal films were programmed into the last half of the show: Mandrill Mother and Baby(1:02), Tree Kangaroo and Baby(0:52), Baby Reindeer(1:44), Animal Coverings(1:24) and Koala(1:03). In such a case, it is difficult to judge how attentive the children might have been to the individual films had they not all occurred in the same program.
>
> Show 274. Theodore Bikel. Nearly half of this program revolved around Bikel. This included his singing of six complete songs and snatches of several others. By the end of the program, only three of the six viewing groups was still in tact, and few of the children in these groups were watching anything.

What Happens on Sesame Street is an Important Programming Variable

These observations support earlier findings that action on the street is generally the weakest part of the program. Of the 14 programs observed, the two that did an excellent job in holding the children's attention were Show 271 and Show 273. Neither of these programs contained many street scenes. Those scenes involving only the live characters tended to be short and to the point. Longer scenes relied heavily on Big Bird who tends to be able to hold the children's attention longer than the live cast members.

The general reactions of the viewing groups to the street scenes appearing in Shows 261-274 are summarized in Table 1. (Specific reactions to these segments can be found in the appendix).

Because of the importance of finding effective ways of using the cast members on Sesame Street, it may be helpful to examine the reactions to these scenes more closely . The observations suggest that some of the following recommendations may be helpful in up-grading the action on the street:

1. Big Bird is definitely the favorite character on the street. When he appears on the scene, the children usually look up to see what's happening. They particularly enjoy seeing his big feet or watching him dance.
2. Although he did not appear very often, the children were equally attentive to Little Bird. They participated fully during his "Imagination Game." Perhaps he could play a greater role on the street.
3. The children are usually attentive to songs when sung by the cast members. They particularly seem to enjoy songs that encourage them to participate, such as the Sorting Song.
4. Children are very responsive to sounds. The segments on Show 273 utilized many sound effects in "Sesame Street is Asleep" and "Sesame Street Wakes Up." These were among the best street scenes in the 14 programs. Another example of effective use of sound was in the Queen's Questions (Show 264).

5. Rockets, hot dogs, dolls, and other topics interesting to children are also successful in involving them in action on the street.

6. The children lose interest when cast members give verbal descriptions of relationships or are involved in skits heavily dependent on words.

7. The children's love of slapstick carries over to street action. In "What happens next ala Pete Smith" the children were very involved and amused.

8. The children were attentive to most of the bits involving Tom. Several of the girls watching teased about Tom being their boyfriend.

9. There is a keen awareness of the inter-relationships among the cast members. For example, when Susan and Miguel sang "Canta" several children remarked about the way Miguel held or looked at Susan. The girls think Susan is cute and are particularly aware of men in the cast responding to her as a girl.

10. Most of the street scenes seem too slow moving. The children are attentive when the actions on the street are more lively or consist of quick shots of cast members that illustrate a point (As in Same/different feet).

Table 1. Reactions of children to the various action taking place on Sesame Street over Shows 261-264.

Scene	Show	Reaction
Little Bird:Imagination Game	262	Excellent
Gordon: "E"	263	Excellent
David & Susan: OP Song	268	Excellent
Same/Different: Feet	269	Excellent
Big Bird's Moon Shot	270	Excellent
Susan Buys Pillows	271	Excellent
Three of these things(Susan)	271	Excellent
Pet Show	262	Good-Excellent(love Slimy)
Queen's Questions	264	Good-Excellent
Three of these things(Gordon)	271	Good-Excellent
Sesame Street Wakes Up	273	Good-Excellent
Tom introduces the ET Family	262	Good
Tom bridges capital and small H	262	Good
"I need someone to be nice to"	264	Good
What happens next (Pete Smith)	267	Good
Oscar's Roses	269	Good
Tom's Chair	271	Good
Tom: Wonderful	271	Good
Susan: Happy/sad faces	272	Good
Bob: "Rhythm"	272	Good
Sesame Street at Night	273	Good
Big Bird tries to be Hooper & Hemlock	273	Good
Canta	273	Good
Susan Undresses Doll	265	Good
Susan Remembers Rain	261	Fair-Good
Big Bird: Triangle Poemlet	266	Fair-Good
Cast does V Sounds	267	Fair-Good
Cooperation:Fish Fry	270	Fair-Good
Milk/Leche	271	Fair-Good
Buying Hot Dogs	272	Fair-Good
Hooper's Reaching Device	263	Fair
Oscar's Can Opener	264	Fair
Ice Cream Machine(5 segments)	265	Fair
Fireman	266	Fair
Grouch Song	266	Fair
Big Bird: Multiple Classification	269	Fair
Gordon:Remembering	269	Fair
Elevator Door Wipe	269	Fair
Feet for all season:Gordon	270	Fair
Sorting Song:Bob	270	Fair
Big Bird is sick	273	Fair

(continued)

Table 1. (Continued)

Scene	Show	Reaction
Oscar Makes a Sundae	268	Poor-Fair
Hooper Counts	268	Poor-Fair
Susan and Kids: Proud	262	Poor
Gordon: Above/Below	262	Poor
Tom: Same/Different	262	Poor
Susan Calls Gordon	263	Poor
Oscar's Letters	263	Poor
"Everyone makes mistakes"	263	Poor
Big Bird: Reading	263	Poor
Big Bird: Basketball	263	Poor
Gordon: Rhyming Game	266	Poor
Big Bird doesn't get angry	267	Poor
Susan: Mama and Papa	267	Poor
Bob and David: Between	268	Poor
Big Bird Cleans the Street	268	Poor
Three of these things(Bad Visuals)	268	Poor
Tiende	269	Poor
Gordon reads the paper	271	Poor
Big Bird: Mysterious tricycle	274	Poor
Oscar's request	274	Poor

Introduction of Elements That Bring Attention Back

Looking over the observations of any one group, one sees that once the group's attention is lost it takes a special type of programming element to get it back. Often when the children lose interest during one bit, they remain inattentive missing several of those following it until something happens to pull them back to the set. Before listing some of the variables that seem important in pulling children back to the TV, it may be helpful to trace through the reactions to one complete show to clarify the problem.

> Show 262. The children were very attentive to the first part of this program (ID, Theme, Tom introduces the Et Family, Et Song, Pet Show, Dog to Bird, Pets are Judged, and Monkeys Count to 20). They eventually lost interest as the pet show theme dragged on.

When this happened, the very next bit (H-Horseshoe) had an effective voice that brought them right back. They remained attentive for the next several bits (Little Bird: Imagination Game, Two Hands: Piece of Cake, Block Stacking, Poverty H, Quick Cuts-H, Cookie Monster H, H-Hello, H-Hole, Tom bridges H and h, and Hubley H). Their attention was then lost during Ernie and the Air Salesman. This bit was too difficult for them to follow and their attention strayed. They remained inattentive for "tails" but began watching again when "Hands Count to 11" came on the screen. The announcers voice, the children's voices and the visual simplicity all may have contributed to regaining their attention. The children remained attentive to Muppet Draws 11, but lost interest when the action switched to the street (Susan and Kids Find Ways to Feel Proud). They remained inattentive for "Green" which was not zippy enough to get them back. The "Sweeper Animation" brought them back, but Gordon (Above/Below) lost them again. George's Farm wasn't strong enough to pull them back, but the music from "Up, Up and Away" did get their attention. They lost interest again immediately afterwards and remained inattentive until Dot Hill brought most of them back. After this they stayed attentive for Roosevelt Franklin and Dot Hill II. Although they seemed to like the Bus Film, it was too long for most of them and during this film and the following (bus stop) all attention was lost.

In this program, it is important to note that the children's attention is never lost for too long. The bits that are effective in pulling the viewer back were well distributed throughout the show, keeping attention fairly even. By contrast, Show 269 starts off very slowly. In this program there are several longer, slower bits back-to-back in the first part of the show. Many of the children were lost for long portions of the program. During the second half the pace picked up and attention really improved.

The Length of Individual Programming Elements

Earlier, the point was made that some of the street themes seemed to be overworked, giving the show a feeling of sameness. The same holds true for individual show segments. Films like "Bus Driver" and "Giraffe" were very effective except that they were too long and lost children as they went on. The tendency to dwell too long on the same subject is also evident in

several of the bits involving Ernie (Ernie and Bert: Cake, Show 265 and Ernie and the monster: Short/Long time, Show 274).

Usually, when long pieces are broken up into several episodes, the attention is better. The Jellybean story (Show 273) is a good example of this. The point is even clearer when one compares the reactions to Grover in the Op Family (Show 270) and in the Et Family (Show 263). In Show 270, the Op Family was presented as one bit and attention was poor. The Et Family was presented as three segments and attention was excellent. Perhaps the reason this didn't work for Ernie and Cookie in the Short/ Long Time bit was that the segments were too much the same.

Comparing Program Elements

In this section we will attempt to compare the effectiveness with which similar types of programming material maintain the attention of the viewers. By collecting observations on various types of programming, it will become evident that certain categories of material are holding attention well, while others are beginning to lose interest for the children. After reviewing the separate categories of programming, individually, an attempt will be made to summarize the material and draw implications for production.

Teaching Numbers

The variety of material utilized in these 14 programs directed toward numbers goals is summarized in Table 2. All of the Henson films are extremely effective in getting the children to watch and to participate. The involvement of children viewing these films is remarkable. By comparison, the Jazz films look like poor second-cousins. They are still holding their

Table 2. Materials used in Programs 261-274 that reflect objectives dealing with number.

Film or Tape Segment	Show	Reaction
Computer 10	261	Excellent
Computer 10	261	Excellent
Computer 10	272	Excellent
Computer 4	266	Excellent
Stop Motion 12	263	Excellent
Henson 7	269	Excellent
Henson 8	270	Excellent
Henson 12	274	Excellent
Jazz 10	261	Good-Excellent
Jazz 10	261	Good
Jazz 3	265	Good
Jazz 3	265	Good
Jazz 5	267	Good-Excellent
Jazz 5	267	Good-Excellent
Jazz 6	268	Good
Jazz 6	268	Fair-Good
Jazz 8	270	Fair
Jazz 9	271	Good
Jazz 10	272	Fair-Good
Hands Count to 11	262	Excellent
Monkeys Count to 11	262	Excellent
Count Up (to 20)	269	Excellent
King of Eight	270	Good-Excellent
Queen of Six	268	Good
Elevator	269	Good
1-2 Erase	270	Good
Penguin 4	266	Fair
Penguin 5	267	Fair-Good
Dolphins jump (10)	268	Fair
A.M.Baseball	273	Excellent
A.M. Basketball	267	Good-Excellent
Grover and Herb: 1-20	271	Good-Excellent
Four Cheers	266	Good
Monster Addition	272	Fair-Good
Muppet draws 11	262	Fair

own, but it is evident that over the programs observed there was a slight decrement in attention to these films.

The children seem to enjoy counting and are pretty attentive to almost any piece that allows them to count along. Additional segments dealing with number goals can be found in Table 10, Guest Stars on Sesame

Street. Here their enjoyment in counting is evidenced in their reactions to Pat Paulsen counting. One of the children gets upset because he counts so slowly.

Reciting the Alphabet

The films and tapes used to teach the alphabet in Shows 261-274 are summarized in Table 3. Every piece used for this purpose worked well. The children enjoy playing a game with the alphabet. They try to be the first one to say the next letter correctly.

Table 3. Materials in Shows 261-274 designed to teach the alphabet.

Film or Tape	Show	Reaction
Alphabet Media	266	Excellent
Alphabet Song	269	Excellent
LMB ALphabet	264	Good-Excellent
Gangster Alphabet	261	Good
Alphabet Song(Capitals)	263	Good
Roosevelt Franklin	262	Good
Flip Wilson	272	Good
Anything Muppets	273	Good
Grover and Herb	267	Good

Teaching Letters

The materials used to teach individual letters on Shows 261-274 are presented in Table 4 along with a summary of the reactions to these pieces. Most of the material used to teach reading is animated. All of our earlier research has shown that animation is one of the favorite production techniques of preschool children.

Looking at Table 4, we see that most of the films are still doing a good job in holding children's attention. However, few of these pieces are really grabbing them. This is probably due to the excessive exposure these films have had over the last two programming seasons. Another possible explanation is that the children observed in these groups tend to be older, around five rather than four years of age. Many of them have watched Sesame Street for two years now and know most of their letters. One indication of this is the extent to which they enjoyed watching the Skywriter and Crossover films. Here they had to use their knowledge of the letter to guess what the correct answer would be.

The best single film in this category was Filmfair I. The children really jumped to attention when it came on and got very involved in it. They also like the Hubley films. They seem to be particularly attracted by his voice, and many of the boys try to mimic him.

The Imagination films are still doing a good job in holding attention. Many of the children know the Imagination E story by heart and recite along with the story teller. They also know what is going to happen in H-Hello and like to tell their friends what to expect. Wanda the Witch still intrigues them. As one boy puts it, "I like witches." The children seemed to enjoy seeing the snow in this film now that the seasons have changed.

Table 4. Materials used in Shows 261-274 directed toward Letter Goals.

Film or Tape	Show	Reaction
Imagination E	261	Good
Imagination E	263	Good
Imagination V	267	Good
Imagination V	269	Fair-Good
Imagination O	274	Good-Excellent
Poverty H	262	Good
Poverty H	263	Fair
Poverty H	263	Good
Poverty Q	264	Fair-Good
Poverty Q	266	Fair-Good
Poverty T	265	Good
Poverty T	265	Fair-Good
Poverty T	265	Good-Excellent
Poverty X	270	Poor-Fair
Poverty X	272	Fair-Good
Hubley H	262	Good
Hubley H	263	Good
Hubley H	363	Good
Hubley V	267	Good
Hubley V	269	Fair-Good
E Eat	261	Excellent
E Eat	263	Good
E Egg	261	Good-Excellent
E Egg	263	Good
H Horseshoe	262	Excellent
H Horseshoe	263	Fair-Good
H Hole	262	Good
H Hole	263	Good
H Hole	263	Fair
H Hello	262	Good
H Hello	263	Fair-Good
Quick Cuts H	262	Good-Excellent
Quick Cuts I	268	Good
Quick Cuts I	268	Fair-Good
Hanging Q	264	Good
Hanging Q	266	Fair-Good
Q Quarter	264	Fair
Q Quarter	266	Good

CONTINUED

Table 4. (Continued)

Film or Tape	Show	Reaction
T Train	265	Good
T Train	266	Good
T Toys	265	Good
T Toys	266	Good
T TV	266	Good
V Violin	267	Good
V Violin	267	Fair-Good
V Violin	269	Good
V Virgil Veep	267	Good
V Virgil Veep	269	Fair-Good
I Ice Cream	268	Good-Excellent
I Ice Cream	268	Good-Excellent
I Impolite	268	Fair
I Impolite	268	Fair
I Impolite	269	Good
Film Fair I	268	Excellent
Film Fair I	268	Excellent
Film Fair I	269	Excellent
W Worm	271	Good
W Worm	272	Good
Wanda the Witch	271	Good
Wanda the Witch	272	Good
W Water	272	Fair
Film Fair W	272	Fair
XX X-Ray	270	Poor
Y Yellow Yahoo	273	Fair
Y Yoyo	273	Fair
O-Oh=	274	Good
O Paratore	274	Good
O Open	274	Good
Sherlock Hemlock V	267	Good
Sherlock Hemlock V	269	Good

Teaching Words

The teaching of sight vocabulary words was not one of the objectives during Sesame Street's first year. Therefore, all of the material used in Shows 261-274 to teach words is new this season. This material is summarized in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Reactions of children to materials designed to teach sight vocabulary words.

Film or Tape	Show	Reaction
Grover: Exit	261	Excellent
Hubley: Exit	261	Excellent
Grover: The	266	Good-Excellent
Baby Monster: Is	269	Fair-Good
You	274	Fair-Good

The children really enjoy seeing Grover take a beating. They laugh out loud at his slapstick type of performance. Again, Hubley's voice is excellent in calling attention to the word. Several mimic him saying "Exit" in a deep voice.

"Baby Monster: Is" was the last piece on Show 269, and it followed the Alphabet Song. Most of the children were still singing while it was on, so it's difficult to determine how this would have fared somewhere else in the program. The children tend to watch most skits involving the Anything Muppets. This came early in the show and many of the groups weren't settled yet.

Word Families

Whether or not to retain the objective of teaching word families has been brought into serious question over the last year. The materials used to teach them in Shows 261-274 is summarized in Table 6. The reactions of the children to these pieces were very encouraging. Because of the seriousness of the decision to be made regarding this objective, it may be well to look at these responses more closely.

Table 6. Materials included in Shows 261-274 directed toward the teaching of Word Families.

Film or Tape	Show	Reaction
Tom introduces the Et Family	262	Good
Et Song	262	Excellent
Grover and Herb: Et Family	263	Excellent
Ig Song	264	Fair-Good
Ig Family	267	Fair-Good
Op Song	268	Excellent
Grover: Op Family	270	Poor-Fair(long)
Un Family	272	Excellent
Un Family Song	272	Good-Excellent
Sun	273	Good-Excellent
Fun	273	Good
Run	273	Fair-Good

The specific responses of children to these Word Family inserts are included in the appendix to this report. Anyone who questions whether Sesame Street should include them as part of its curriculum is encouraged to read these responses.

The children were not only attentive to these segments, but participated fully when they were on. More importantly, they often anticipated the correct word, indicating that they had a real understanding of what was going on. Another indication that they understood were comments like "That's the Op Family" or "The Un Family."

An equally important feature of these segments was the way Grover and Herb were able to get the children slurring sounds. This is one of the most effective means used so far on Sesame Street to get the children involved with the sounds of letters.

Relational Concepts

The materials used to teach relational concepts are summarized in Table 7. The most consistent approach to this goal area in Shows 261-274 was through the use of the George's Farm films. These films were not very appealing to the children except for "Over/Under."

The most effective piece in this category was Potterdon Up/Down. They were attracted by the unusual sounds and really liked the pogo stick. Several remarked that they wanted one or were going to buy one.

None of the bits involving cast members was watched to any extent. The children tend to lose interest when the action turns to the street for most material. Using pictures to play a game (Gordon: Above/Below) never seems to work very well, as the visuals aren't clear enough for the children.

Table 7. Reactions of children to material designed to teach Relational Concepts.

Bit	Show	Reaction
George's Farm: Above/Below	262	Fair-Good
George's Farm: Up/Down	265	Fair-Good
George's Farm: Over/Under	270	Good-Excellent
George's Farm: Near/Far	272	Poor
Gordon: Above/Below	262	Poor
Tom: Same/Different	262	Poor
Bab and David:Between	268	Poor
Kermit: Between	268	Fair-Good
Ernie: Near/Far	272	Poor
Grover: Near/Far	272	Poor
Ernie and Monster: Short/Long Time	274	Good----Poor (Too long)
Quick-Cuts: Up/Down	261	Poor
Baby Alice:Over/Under	270	Good-Excellent
Potterdon: Up/Down	261	Excellent
Batman: Clean/Dirty	263	Good-Excellent
Same/Different: Feet	269	Good

Most of the children watched the Baby Alice: Over/Under film. One boys response to her know-it-all attituded was, "I know the difference, Fatso." Alice really seems to come across just as she was intended.

Powers of the Mind

Most of the material designed to teach the powers of the mind is relatively new. A summary of the reactions to these films is presented in Table 8. Every film was effective in holding the children's attention. It was difficult to tell if the children understood what was going on in "Heads" and "Boy and Cart."

They really enjoyed "Spilled Milk." The children would smile as the little boy lied, seemingly understanding the joke. They also seemed to understand "Dog to Bird." Comments like "He's going to be a bird." and "He still chases cats" indicate that they understood that the dog remained a dog except for outward appearance.

The "Boy-Mind" bit was by far the most successful. The children kept predicting what was going to happen, getting very involved in this segment. They also participated fully in the Little Bird: Imagination bit. It is difficult to imagine what they were imagining, but they followed Little Bird's directions completely. This was a very effective bit, particularly for a street scene.

Table 8. Powers of the mind.

Bit	Show	Reaction
I Thought a Thought	261	Good
	268	Good
	271	Good--Excellent
I've got a mind	269	Good
	271	Good
Little Bird: Imagination Game	262	Excellent
Dog to Bird	262	Excellent
Boy and Cart	268	Good
Heads	268	Good
Spilled Milk	270	Good-Excellent
Boy-Mind	271	Excellent

Cooperation

As part of a formative research study in the area of cooperation, three bits were written by members of the Writer's Workshop. These included: Grover's Tug of War, Block Stacking and Making a Mural. A summary of the reactions to these bits is presented in Table 9.

Table 9. Bits designed to encourage cooperative behavior.

Insert	Show	Reaction
Grover's Tug of War	261	Good
	263	Fair
	265	Good
	267	Good
	269	Good
	272	Good
Block Stacking	262	Good-Excellent
	264	Good-Excellent
	266	Fair-Good
	268	Good
	270	Good
	274	Good
Mural	271	Good-Excellent
	273	Excellent

Grover's Tug of War elicited many comments about monsters and a good deal of laughter, but few children indicated that they thought the monsters should start cooperating with Grover. On the other hand, Block Stacking evoked comments like, "Wait, they're gonna do it right," or "they gotta pile em high." One child didn't seem to understand, though. He announced that Gordon and Tom were going to use magic to make a tower bigger than they were. The children particularly liked Mural. They were surprised when the two separate drawings were combined to make a house. This appealed to them.

Comparing Production Techniques

In this section material representing various production techniques such as pixillation, mystery drawings, muppets, etc. will be reviewed in an attempt to determine what production methods result in the fullest attention. Some of the specific films or inserts have been discussed earlier as they related to specific program objectives. They will now be viewed as representative of an approach that can be used in various goal situations.

Use of Guest Stars

A summary of the reactions of children to guest celebrities on Sesame Street is presented in Table 10. The children really seem to enjoy seeing people they know on the program. Each time Bill Cosby or Flip Wilson appeared several children would call out their names. They were similarly attentive when they saw characters from Bonanza, or the Mets. Batman is still very exciting to these youngsters and several started to play Batman and Robin after they saw him.

The children are less attentive to characters they don't know as well like Pete Seegar or Peggy Flemming. The Listen My Brother group is one of the children's favorite things on Sesame Street. This is the only thing the children asked for on the show. Several children wanted to know if the LMB group would be on that day. These singers and Roosevelt Franklin represent people the children strongly identify with. Over and over again when they would see them, the children would point to a member of the group and say, "That's me" or "That's my mother."

In general, guest stars seem to add to the appeal for the program, particularly when they are people the children know and love, or can identify with.

Table 10. Guest stars on Sesame Street.

Insert	Show	Reaction
Cosby and Kids	266	Excellent
Cosby: Happy	272	Excellent
Cosby: Sad	272	Good-Excellent
Cosby: Surprise	268	Good
Cosby: 1-20	274	Good
Cosby: Yesterday/Today	273	Good
Flip Wilson: 1-20	273	Excellent
Flip Wilson: Alphabet	272	Good
Mets Miss: 4	267	Good-Excellent
Mets Miss: 5	267	Good-Excellent
Mets Miss: 14	267	Good-Excellent
Peggy Flemming: 6	268	Fair-Good
Peggy Flemming: 8	270	Good
Bonanza Counts	265	Excellent
Paulsen Counts	263	Good
Pete Seegar: Imagination Song	270	Fair
LMB: Alphabet	264	Good-Excellent
LMB: Counting	266	Excellent
LMB: Children are Beautiful	268	Excellent
LMB: Body Parts	270	Excellent

Use of Songs

The children are particularly receptive to music on the program and will often respond to it even when they are not watching. Many of the songs that appear in Table 11 have been used over and over again on the program and they still seem to retain their appeal. This list is in no way complete. It includes only the pieces that were done primarilly as songs rather than as background music for films.

In general, the children seem to enjoy all types of music, but respond in different ways. They tend to listen to slower tunes or rock

Table 11. Songs on Sesame Street

Song		Show	Reaction
Whistle a Happy Tune		265	Excellent
Alphabet Song (Capitals)		269	Excellent
Everyone Likes Ice Cream		271	Excellent
Mad		273	Excellent
Word Family:	ET	262	Excellent
	Op	268	Excellent
	Ig	264	Fair-Good
Five Fingers		267	Good-Excellent
Surprise		268	Good-Excellent
A, You're Adorable		265	Good-Excellent
Roosevelt Franklin:	Name	261	Good-Excellent
	Days of the Week	263	Good-Excellent
	Alphabet	262	Good
People in Your Neighborhood		265	Good-Excellent
		272	Good
		268	Fair-Good
Alphabet Song		263	Good
U , Up and Away		263	Good
I need Someone to be Nice To		264	Good
Canta		273	Good
Help		267	Fair-Good
Green		262	Fair-Good
Grouch Song		266	Fair
Grover's Song		269	Fair
Starshine		261	Poor
Everyone Makes Mistakes		263	Poor

to them. Snappier tunes tend to get them up and dancing.

The children seem to really enjoy all the tunes done by the Anything Muppets as a group. When any of the muppets sings alone, they don't seem as responsive. The tunes seem to be slower when they are sung alone, however, so it's difficult to determine which factor is important.

Mystery Drawings

Four mystery drawings were included in shows 261-274. The children really love these, as is evident from their reactions (See Table 12.) During these films virtually all the children get involved in the bit, shouting "No" with the kids voices on the soundtrack.

Table 12. Mystery Drawings

Film	Show	Reaction
Drawing a Nurse	264	Excellent
Drawing a Mailman	265	Excellent
Drawing a Camel	271	Excellent
Drawing an Astronaut	272	Excellent

Pixillation

The pixillated inserts are still an effective means of holding the children's attention. A summary of the reactions to those bits included in Shows 261-274 is presented in Table 13. For additional information on pixillation, see Table 9 (Page 20). The children like trying to mimic the action they observe in these pixillated bits. During the testing for the Oregon Cooperation Study, the children re-enacted the Mural and Block Stacking bits in fantastic detail.

Table 13. Pixillation

Insert	Show	Reaction
Broom and Dustpan	261	Excellent
Chairs	263	Good
12 Crossover	263	Good
Summer-Winter Crossover	268	Fair
0 Crossover	273	Excellent
2-3 Crossover	266	Excellent

Films

The children's reactions to the films used in Shows 261-274 are summarized in Table 14. For more information on reactions to a specific film, see the appendix attached to this paper.

Films that are paced more rapidly and films with unusual sound tracks tend to be the most appealing to the children. As is evident from this list, animation is still one of the most appreciated techniques. Animation dealing with letters, numbers or specific goals discussed earlier are not included here.

Length is an important variable in films. Several lost the children as they went along, even though the children were really involved for the first part.

One film that children responded exceptionally well to was used in place of "I've Got a Mind" at the very end of Show 266. No information on the name of the film was available to the observors, but perhaps someone in production could furnish this information.

Table 14. Summary of the reactions to films used in Shows 261-274.

Film	Show	Reaction
Beginnings	261	Excellent
Bus Film	262	Excellent
Dot Hill # 1	262	Excellent
Dot Hill # 2	262	Excellent
Sweeper Animation	262	Excellent
Story of the Triangle and the Square	263	Excellent
Night Sounds	264	Excellent
Night Sounds	271	Excellent
Body Parts Puzzle	264	Excellent
Doll House	264	Excellent
I am a Letter	265	Excellent
Hubley Telephone	265	Excellent
Cat and Mouse Chase	265	Excellent
Patterns	265	Excellent
Mouse in House	266	Excellent
Paint Animation	267	Excellent
Money	267	Excellent
Body Parts Film	264	Good-Excellent
Body Parts Film	270	Excellent
Ice Cream Factory	271	Excellent
Clay Shapes	261	Good-Excellent
Ring-tailed lemur	261	Good-Excellent
The hands milk	268	Good-Excellent
Painting Red	268	Good-Excellent
What's that Squiggle?	270	Good-Excellent
Dot Bridge	261	Good
Giraffes	261	Good(Long)
Bears and Bees	261	Good
Feet	264	Good
Lizards	265	Good
Baby Fantasy	268	Good
Koala	267	Good
Firemen	266	Good
Jungle Abstract	269	Good
Digger ?	269	Good
Same/Different: Feet	269	Good
Birds	270	Good
What are Babies Called	270	Good
Touch and Feel	271	Good
Farm Sounds	272	Good
Penguin Rhythms	272	Good
Grasshopper	273	Good
Paint Animation	273	Good

(Continued)

Table 14. (Continued)

Film	Show	Reaction
Baby Reindeer	267	Fair-Good
Brugoni's Flowers	269	Fair-Good
Bees	273	Fair-Good
Building Grows	274	Fair-Good
Rain Visions	261	Fair
Bus Stop	262	Fair
Zoo Birds	262	Fair
Apes Play	263	Fair
Auto	264	Fair
No Matter How you Count Them	264	Fair
Indian Child	264	Fair(Long)
Frogs	265	Fair
Store Sizes	269	Fair
Cloud Images	269	Fair
Today is Monday	271	Fair
Bridges	272	Fair
Pigs	274	Fair
How do you clean a car?	263	Poor-Fair
Animal Coverings	267	Poor-Fair
Car Making	264	Poor
Rhythm	265	Poor
Mandrill Mother and Baby	267	Poor
Kangaroo Baby	267	Poor
Flower	271	Poor

Out of the 22 animal films in this list, only the Ring-tailed Lemur did an exceptional job of attracting the children. The Mandrill Baby and Mother, and Kangaroo Baby were both shown in a program with five animal films. The reactions to these films may have been better if they had been viewed in another context.

Muppet Inserts

Because of the central role the muppets play in Sesame Street it may be helpful to take a closer look at the insert material used in these programs. Table 15 summarizes the reactions to the Ernie, Bert Cookie inserts, and Table 16 summarizes the reactions to the other

Table 15. Ernie, Bert and the Cookie Monster

Bit	Show	Reaction
Cookie: H	262	Good-Excellent
Ernie's Seven Cupcakes	265	Good-Excellent
Ernie's Selection Song	267	Good-Excellent
Monster and Flute	267	Good-Excellent
Monster Up/Down Song	261	Good
Ernie: Remembering	261	Good
Ernie and Bert:Cake	265	Good(long)
Ernie and Bert: Telephone/Banana	265	Good
Monster:Telephone	265	Good
Ernie and Monster: One Cookie	266	Good
Ernie and Bert: Clean Up	268	Good
Ernie's Bath	269	Good
Ernie is disguised	269	Good
Cookie makes a sandwich	270	Good
Ernie and Bert: Rain	272	Good
Cookie's Poem	273	Good
Ernie's Balloons	273	Good
Ernie and Monster:Short/Long time	274	Good---poor (long)
Ernie and Bert:Shapes	268	Fair-Good
Ernie and Bert: Share	268	Fair-Good
Ernie and Monster: Erase	270	Fair-Good
Ernie and Bert: Zoo, balloon,etc.	271	Fair-Good
Ernie Matches Cookies	261	Fair
Ernie and the Air Salesman	262	Fair
Ernie and Scales	264	Fair
Ernie and the Candy Salesman	264	Fair
Bert Gets Angry	267	Fair
Ernie and Bert: Eat Sandbox	270	Fair
Ernie and Bert: X Marks the Spot	270	Fair
Bert's Bottle Cap Collection	272	Fair
Ernie and Gordon: Balls and Boxes	272	Fair
Ernie and Bert: Cookie Cabinet	261	Poor
Ernie defines Ball	263	Poor
Ernie: Near/Far	272	Poor
Ernie isn't here.	274	Poor

Table 15. Muppet Inserts

Insert	Show	Reaction
Grover and Herb: ET Family	263	Excellent
Whistle a Happy Tune	265	Excellent
Three Monsters	271	Excellent
Ira and Inez	268	Excellent
Boy-Mind	271	Excellent
Everybody's Different	269	Excellent
A.M.Baseball	273	Excellent
Shadows	271	Good-Excellent
Count up to 20	271	Good-Excellent
T-H-E	266	Good-Excellent
Roosevelt spells his name	261	Good-Excellent
Roosevelt:Days of the week	263	Good-Excellent
Tough Luck Lester	266	Good-Excellent
Jellybeans	273	Good-Excellent
A.M.Basketball	267	Good-Excellent
A.M.Alphabet	267	Good
Up,up and away	262	Good
Roosevelt:Alphabet	262	Good
Monster Up/Down Song	261	Good
Woman Buys a Coat	266	Good
Four Chairs	266	Good
Most beautiful woman in the world	274	Good
Muppet adding	270	Good
Sherlock Hemlock V	267	Good
Sherlock Hemlock V	269	Good
Monster Noises	271	Good
Baby Monster: Is	269	Fair-Good
Monster Addition	272	Fair-Good
Circles: 2 Monsters	272	Fair-Good
Hermit:Between	268	Fair-Good
Y-O-U	274	Fair-Good
Look for triangles	266	Fair
Grover's Song	269	Fair
Hoppong Poem	271	Fair
Green	262	Fair
Alphabet O'Malley	268	Fair
Muppet draws 11	262	Fair
Grover: Surprise	261	Poor (Long)
Grover: Near/Far	272	Poor
Bob and the Circle Salesman	270	Poor

Although many of the Ernie, Bert and Cookie bits are still able to attract children, their popularity seems to have decreased a good deal. Most of these bits have been around for a good while, however, and have been used pretty heavily.

It's particularly interesting to contrast these bits with the reactions to other muppets who have had less exposure. Grover is very popular with the children, and so are the Anything Muppets. The Anything Muppets are endlessly variable, so the children get little chance to tire of them.

The three stories, Ira and Inez, Jellybeans, and The Most Beautiful Woman in the World, all held attention well. This technique works so much better than the story reading that was done in the first broadcast season.

Summary and Recommendations

1. The children lose interest when the program dwells too long on one subject, resulting in a "feeling of sameness." If longer bits are broken into segments to avoid this, then each segment should have its own point to make and should look like more than a mere continuation of the one preceeding it.

2. The children were extremely responsive to Little Bird in the "Imagination" bit. Perhaps more of these could be done.

3. Night Sounds, Potterdon Up/Down, Queen's Questions, and Sesame Street Wakes Up all made effective use of sound. The children really respond to this.

3. The effectiveness of "What happens next ala Pete Smith" and "Sesame Street Wakes Up" suggest that more episodes where a story teller voice ties street actions together could help overcome some of the difficulties in the street scenes. For one thing, it would reduce the amount of talking among cast members. This seems to turn the kids off.

4. Power-packed attention getting films like the Henson Computer, Dot Hill and Hand sequences should be spaced throughout the program to pull attention back if it strays. Once the children are distracted it takes a fairly strong film to get them back.

5. Although most of the films treating the Number Goals are still holding some attention, the Henson films are by far the most effective. The children really respond to the computer animation films.

6. The children respond positively to just about anything on the screen that allows them to recite the alphabet. They really like this.Whatever follows an alphabet film should either be a piece that the child is not expected to watch closely, or it should be a powerful film. The children tend to keep on reciting the alphabet after it is over.

7. The segments that seem to have suffered the greatest loss in attention are the letter films and the Ernie and Bert bits. All of these have been widely used in the two years of programming. The letter bits that have stood up well seem to be those with a story line (Wanda or Imagination E) or those with a comical ending (H-Hello). The most effective letter film was Film Fair I.

8. The children are responding well to the Word Family segments and it is recommended that we continue to include them in the curriculum.

9. Most of the material used to teach relational concepts was pretty dull.

10. The children were very attentive to the films directed at Powers of the Mind. The Dog-to-Bird technique held their attention well.

11. The Listen My Brother Group is extremely popular with the children. They tend to identify with this group and with Roosevelt Franklin. When these characters are on the screen there is a flood of "That's me," "That's you," That's my sister" comments.

12. The children tend to enjoy songs done by the Anything Muppets more than songs sung by an individual muppet.

13. The children like to have a chance to guess. They respond well to "Mystery Drawings," the Skywriter" and films of this nature. They seem to respond better when the problem is put to them directly than when it is put to children on the set.